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Get Mengele; get the KGB

Etymology has been unfair to the Marquis de Sade, the 19th century Frenchman who represented a kind of pluperfect cruelty to other human beings. For *sadism*, please substitute *mengelism*, after Josef Mengele, the mad doctor of Auschwitz.

Dr. Mengele, who practiced his torturous genetic experiments on any sets of twins whose misfortune it was to be cattle-prodded into his death camp, has eluded capture for 40 years. From Portugal to Paraguay, Mengele sightings have been recorded. At last, the civilized world seems serious about bringing Dr. Mengele to justice. To be present at his hanging would be to shout, Hip hip...

Hooray? The civilized world takes satisfaction from the pending prosecution of such a transcendent ogre as Auschwitz's "angel of death," if he can be apprehended before he dies unassisted. Granting the propriety of the get-Mengele mobilization, the renewed Nazi hunt nevertheless raises serious questions, both jurisdictional and moral.

The Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, mandated by then-Rep. Elizabeth Holtzman's 1979 legislation, has cast a net nationwide for other Nazi war criminals who, in the immediate postwar years, fraudulently slipped past U.S. immigration officials. Although many of these people have since lived productive lives, no one will argue that their crimes should be

forgiven, if they can be established through due process.

Therein, the rub. The OSI seems content to follow normal immigration procedures, deporting the hapless suspects for trial in Eastern Bloc countries where due process is unheard of. What's more, according to Baltic-American groups, OSI investigations often are conducted in concert with Soviet officials, including KGB operatives, for whom an accusation is synonymous with guilt.

Why the KGB's sudden interest in Nazi war criminals? The Baltic-Americans, who have made themselves a headache for the OSI, theorize that the Soviets can make propaganda gains over the growingly restive Baltic states by demonstrating Nazi collaboration. In addition, preoccupation with 40-year-old atrocities may distract attention from the Soviets' continuing enormities. The war-crimes issue also drives still deeper the wedge between the American Jewish community and Baltic-Americans, the unison of whose anti-Sovietism is powerful indeed.

If the Justice Department is cooperating with the heirs of Stalin, this is a judicial travesty. Hitler, after all, learned all about death camps from Stalin, one of whose pupils was Josef Mengele. Attorney General William French Smith has added Dr. Mengele to the most-wanted list, which is fair enough. One of Edwin Meese's first acts should be to investigate the OSI-KGB connection, and explain it.